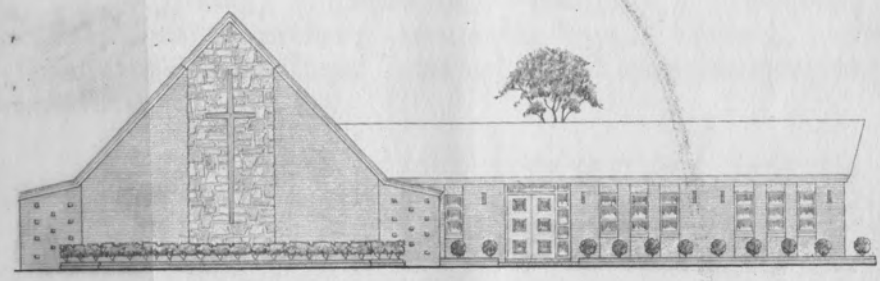
WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH

Hampton, Virginia,

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH



(Architect's drawing of the first unit of the new building.)

October 14, 1962 to April 7, 1964

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GENERAL RULES
THE METHODIST CHURCH

First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

Drunkeness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using of many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking of things on usury-- that is, unlawful interest.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The taking of such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Softness and needless self indulgence.

Laying up treasure upon earth.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

Second: By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison;

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that "we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

Third: By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

The public worship of God.
The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.
The Supper of the Lord.
Family and private prayer.
Searching the Scriptures.
Fasting or abstinence.

The General Rules of The Methodist Church were composed by John Wesley himself to help new converts in their Christain growth. These rules are over 200 years old and this will account for the fact that some are outdated--but many are timeless.

FOREWORD

The writer in preparing these pages has made use of all church records available.

She would register her indebtedness to many people for information which they supplied.

To these the writer would acknowledge and express gratitude.

DEDICATION

This history is dedicated to all whose love for Christ and vision of the Methodist possibilities in this area wrought nobly for the organization of the Wesley Methodist Church on April 7, 1963.

It is likewise dedicated to those who moved their membership and became charter members and leaders in the new church.

We also wish to honor Dr. R. Orman Bryant, District Superintendent, whose wisdom and experience guided us.

Grateful acknowledgment is given for the many dedicated hours of labor rendered by our first pastors, Dr. Ralph W. Johnson, and Rev. Donald P. Davis. These devoted Christian leaders were always a great inspiration to those working with them.

A NEW HOUSE FOR GOD

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

Under Divine leadership and in keeping with the DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, Central Methodist Church, Rev. Wrightson S. Tongue, minister, sponsored a chapel in the area of Sinclair Circle. The idea had been sparked by one of Central's members, Mr. A. W. Brittingham, Sr. It was known as Wesley Chapel and held its first meeting on October 14, 1962.

On April 7, 1963, the chapel was organized into a church of sixty-three members. The church was named Wesley Methodist Church in tribute to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

The first building to serve the church was Circle Lanes Bowling Alley, located at Sinclair Circle.

Dr. Ralph W. Johnson
First Pastor

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:8

Dr. Johnson was born in Racine, Wisconsin, the son of a Methodist minister. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Northland College, Ashland, Wisconsin, and Bachelor of Divinity from Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He also took post graduate work beyond these degrees at several institutions of higher learning: Garrett of Northwestern University, University of Wisconsin. He received a LaForet Fellowship. Dr. Johnson did special clinical research at Milwaukee Childrens Hospital through the University of Wisconsin. In 1958 he was granted the Ph.D. degree. He served churches mostly in the state of Illinois. When Dr. Johnson transferred to the Virginia Conference he was serving as associate minister of the Asbury Methodist Church of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He came to Central Methodist Church as associate minister and was assigned the task of organizing the new chapel.

Dr. Johnson was a very energetic and progressive worker. He managed in a remarkable way to swiftly organize the chapel. He was a man of many fine qualities. He was interested in the members of his church and the community as a whole.

On January 1, 1963, Dr. Johnson was appointed to the Beach Grove Bethel Charge in the new city of Virginia Beach.

Rev. Don P. Davis
Second Pastor

"I will give you pastors according to mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jeremiah 3:15

Rev. Davis was born October 15, 1934, at Seaford, Virginia. He married the former Miss Anne Presson, also of Seaford, June 7, 1958. They have a son, Keith, born July 17, 1962. Rev. Davis was a member of Zion Methodist Church, Seaford, Virginia.

His early education was received in the York County schools. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Randolph Macon College and a Bachelor of Divinity Degree from the Divinity School of Duke University.

He was ordained elder and received into full connection in the Virginia Annual Conference in June, 1961. After serving the Warsaw Methodist Church three and a half years, Rev. Davis was appointed associate pastor of Central Methodist Church, Hampton, and pastor of Wesley Chapel on February 1, 1963.

Rev. Davis has served on the Board of Trustees of Hermitage Methodist Homes of Virginia, Inc., for three years.

He did fine work in preparation for the building of our new church. Rev. Davis has proven to be a fine organizer, and it was his desire to see built in the immediate future a new house of worship, suited to the needs of the church so that a strong and useful church work could bless the community.

The work progressed under his leadership with good spiritual condition. Rev. Davis is a pastor of great capabilities and is sincerely appreciated by his congregation.

CHARTER MEMBERS

Deborah C. Arnold
Patricia J. Arnold
Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Berg
Mrs. Thomas Bizones
Mrs. B. G. Boger
Mr. and Mrs. Denver Carter
Mrs. Don P. Davis
Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Davis
Roger K. Davis
Mr. and Mrs. Paul DeLozier*
Mrs. R. C. Denny
Mrs. Dorothy Dorn
William Ira Ewell*
Mr. and Mrs. John N. Glass
Bonnie Glass
John N. Glass, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Harper
Buddy Ray Harper
Edward Lee Harper
Donald Bruce Harper
Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Heldreth
Nancy Heldreth
Linda Heldreth
Thomas Heldreth
Mrs. Susie B. Jarvis
Mr. and Mrs. Edward D. Johnson*
Edward D. Johnson, Jr.*
Carolyn Johnson*
Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Jones*
Patricia J. Jones
Bonnie S. Jones
Mrs. R. R. Julian
Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Kerr
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Linger
Shirley D. Linger
Ronald D. Linger
Mrs. F. R. McAbee
Mrs. Peggy Newman
Mrs. R. D. Oakley

CHARTER MEMBERS (continued)

Mr. and Mrs. John R. Phillips*
Kenneth J. Phillips*
Carolyn Sue Phillips*
Mrs. Ida G. Sorensen*
Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Stalls
Matthew H. Stalls
Martha N. Stalls
Mrs. Ronald C. Trevallion*
Sylvia Ann Wilkins
Mrs. Estelle Wingate
Mrs. W. E. Wright*

*Members of Central before Wesley was started

Officers for 1963-64

Church Lay Leader ..... John R. Phillips
Church School Superientendent ..... E. D. Johnson
Treasurer ..... A. L. Jones
Recording Steward ..... Mrs. H. R. Davis
Pianist ..... Kenneth J. Phillips
WSCS President ..... Mrs. H. H. Heldreth
District Steward ..... Edward D. Johnson
Reserve District Steward ..... A. L. Jones
Lay Member-Annual Conference ..... John R. Phillips
Reserve Lay Member ..... A. L. Jones
MYF President ..... Kenneth J. Phillips
Communion Steward ..... Mrs. Edward D. Johnson
Official Board Chairman ..... John R. Phillips
Official Board Vice-Chairman ..... Don P. Davis
Official Board Secretary ..... Mrs. H. R. Davis

Commission Chairmen:
- Membership and Evangelism .... Mrs. E. D. Johnson
- Education ..... E. D. Johnson
- Missions ..... Mrs. H. H. Heldreth
- Christian Social Concerns ..... Mrs. R. C. Denny
- Stewardship and Finance ..... A. L. Jones

Elective Stewards ..... J. H. Stalls
Otto Linger
Mrs. John R. Phillips
Mrs. Don P. Davis

Trustees ..... H. H. Heldreth
A. L. Jones
Edward D. Johnson
John R. Phillips

Committee Chairmen:
- Pastoral Relations ..... H. R. Davis
- Records and History ..... Mrs. R. D. Oakley
- Music ..... Mrs. Don P. Davis
- Property ..... J. H. Stalls

BUDGET FOR THE CONFERENCE YEAR

June 1, 1963 to May 31, 1964

I. Local Expenses:

A. Ministerial Support:

1. Pastor's Salary	$1300.00
2. Other Support	221.00
	$1521.00

B. Church Program:

1. Church School	$ 225.00
2. Rent	520.00
3. Miscellaneous	110.00
	$ 855.00

II. Benevolences:

A. World Service	$ 125.00
B. Hermitage	25.00
C. Children's Home	25.00
	$ 175.00

III. Building Fund Goal for the Year.....$1000.00

GRAND TOTAL.....$3551.00

TREASURER'S REPORT

	April 1963	March 1964
Balance on Hand	$415.63	$164.75
Receipts:		
Sunday School	$ 17.18	$ 36.53
Loose Offering	63.10	53.55
Envelopes	37.55	181.15
	$117.83	$271.23
Gross Balance	$533.46	$435.98
Expenditures:		
Pastor's Salary	$ -0-	$108.34
Rent	40.00	50.00
Other	27.48	37.18
	$ 67.48	$195.52
Balance on Hand	$465.98	$240.46

BUILDING FUND

Balance on Hand	-0-	$1924.04
Receipts	-0-	$102.45
Gross Balance	-0-	$2026.49
Expenditures	-0-	$966.55
Balance on Hand	-0-	$1059.94

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Did you know?

Mr. Ira Ewell has a perfect attendance record at both Sunday School and worship services.

The first musical instrument used in the chapel was a portable organ, loaned by a Roman Catholic.

First Choir

Mrs. Don P. Davis, wife of our minister, organized our first choir. The group began with nine members. Rehearsals are held in the parsonage on Linden Avenue.

Mrs. Davis endeared herself to our people by her fine Christian spirit and musical talent.

No pastor's ministry could be as influential nor as far reaching, without the encouragement and inspiration of his helpmate.

Church School

Mr. E.D. Johnson has very ably and faithfully served as Church School superintendent.

Church School began with an attendance of 64. The first workers were: Mr. A. L. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. John R. Phillips, Mr. Ira Ewell, Mrs. E. D. Johnson, Mrs. J. B. Tweedy, and Mrs. John Glass.

Prayer Group

The first prayer group met at the home of Mrs. R. C. Denny, 43 North Greenfield Avenue, on April 24, 1963. This devout group meets every Wednesday.

Vacation Church School

Our first Vacation Church School was held during the week of June 17-21, 1963, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Phillips. There were classes for children between the ages of four and twelve years. The study was "Far and Near," and 24 of the 26 enrolled received certificates. There were nine teachers and helpers: Mrs. R. C. Trevallion, Mrs. Otto Linger, Mrs. R. D. Oakley, Mrs. J. M. Stevens, Mrs. G. C. Baum, Mrs. John Glass, Mrs. E. D. Johnson, Mrs. I. Sorensen, and Mrs. John Phillips.

THE FAITH OF A CHILD

God, give me the faith of a little child!
Who trusts so implicitly.
Who simply and gladly believes Thy Word,
And never would question Thee.

God, give me the faith of a little child!
A faith that will clasp Thy hand,
And willingly go where Thou see'st best,
Though he may not understand.

God, give me the faith of a little child!
A faith that will look to Thee--
That never will falter and never fail,
But follow Thee trustingly.

Geneva Showerman

W.S.C.S.

An organizational meeting of the Woman's Society of Christian Service was held December 3, 1962, at the home of Mrs. H. H. Heldreth. Those present were Mrs. H. H. Heldreth, Mrs. E. D. Johnson, Mrs. John Phillips, Mrs. John Glass, Mrs. Jake Ferguson and Mrs. A. J. Coffman.

Officers elected to serve until May 31, 1963, were:

Mrs. H. H. Heldreth, President
Mrs. E. D. Johnson, Vice-President
Mrs. John Glass, Secretary-Treasurer
Mrs. J. R. Phillips, Secretary of Missionary Education and Finance Commission Chairman

Other offices were not filled at this first meeting due to the number attending.

There are eleven charter members: Mrs. D. P. Davis, Mrs. H. R. Davis, Mrs. Ellen Denny, Mrs. Dorothy Dorn, Mrs. John Glass, Mrs. H. H. Heldreth, Mrs. E. D. Johnson, Mrs. John Phillips, Mrs. Ida Sorensen, Mrs. Martha Stalls, and Mrs. R. C. Trevallion.

As in all churches, the women of this church have been most zealous in carrying on its work. They are doing their full share in their own organization, as well as in other church activities.

Mission Studies

The Commission on Missions sponsored a study of the book "Our Mission Today" beginning on January 12, 1963, and running for six consecutive Sunday evenings. The meetings were held in the homes of members.

This group enjoyed many informative and spiritual hours.

M.Y.F.

The first meeting of the M.Y.F. was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Johnson, January 6, 1963. There were eight present at this first gathering.

This group has had excellent leadership. Their first counsellors were Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Davis. The present counsellors are Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Johnson.

The youth of the church represent the future of the church, so we feel that with such fine young people we have a very bright future.

Music

First Organist--Mrs. Virginia Downey
Present Pianist--Kenneth J. Phillips

"Music is the art of the prophets, the only art that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us." Luther

Communion Steward

Mrs. E. D. Johnson has very faithfully served devoting much time and effort to this work.

Purchase of Land

In November, 1962, a land committee was organized with Mr. A. L. Jones as chairman. Other members were Mr. J. H. Stalls and the minister.

After careful consideration of several locations, land owned by Mr. J. S. Selden on the corner of Tide Mill Lane and North Armistead Avenue was purchased. The price of the land was $31,500 for 9.38 acres. Sawyer and Quinn were employed to handle all legal matters pertaining to the purchase of the land.

Seven acres of land were purchased by the Hermitage Methodist Homes of Virginia, Inc. The home is to provide an acre of parking from this seven acres to be used jointly by the home and the church.

Building Committee

A Building Committee was formed November 12, 1963. Mr. Alfred L. Jones was elected chairman. Other members are: Mrs. H. R. Davis, Mr. H. H. Heldreth, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Phillips and Rev. D. P. Davis.

After meeting with several architects, Mr. Roy J. Cava was selected. In February, 1964, sketches were submitted and approved with a few minor changes. At a congregational meeting held on March 29, 1964, these sketches were unanimously approved by the members present.

MEMORY LANE

Were You There?

On December 23, 1962, the first Christmas program, a pantomine, "Why the Chimes Rang", was presented.

A Warm Welcome for Our Minister

On February 24, 1963, Wesley honored Rev. and Mrs. Donald P. Davis with a reception given at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Phillips.

Central Church was host to members and friends on March 3, 1963, to welcome Rev. and Mrs. Davis.

Both socials served an excellent opportunity for fellowship with our minister and his wife.

Do You Remember?

Do you remember the covered dish supper on March 16, 1963, in the basement of Central Church? Members and friends of Wesley were invited to this family affair. It was followed by a program of fellowship and recreation for all ages.

Sunday School Picnic

A Sunday School picnic was held in Huntington Park, June 30, 1963. After the supper, fellowship and games, the M.Y.F. had vesper services on the hillside overlooking the water.

M.Y.F.

Were you at Central Church for Christian Adventure Week? Did you enjoy the suppers, recreation, singing, worship, study groups and work projects?

Do you remember the spaghetti supper at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Heldreth?

There is still a big question in many minds, as to who had the most fun at the retreat at the shipyard recreation center on the Chickahominy River, September 14-15. Many would say the counselors.

Church Social

On September 8, 1963, an ice cream social was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bizones, 22 N. Greenfield Avenue. This affair was very much enjoyed.

First Tranksgiving Church Supper

The first Thanksgiving supper, November 16, 1963, was considered a big success. About 40 attended and fun was had by all.

Looking to the Future

One Sunday afternoon Rev. and Mrs. Davis, Mr. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Heldreth and Mr. and Mrs. Johnson took picnic lunches and visited churches looking for ideas that might be helpful in building the new church.

W.S.C.S.

The ladies will remember the enjoyable dinner at the Sykes Inn in Smithfield, Virginia.

GIFTS

Communion Set.....Mrs. C. O. Price

Piano.....Classes and Members of Central

Cross.....Mrs. Elizabeth Hunt

Offering Plates.....M.Y.F.

Altar Cloths, Silver Communion Cup, Candlesticks, Lectern.....Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Johnson

"The heart of the given makes the gift dear and precious.------Luther"

In behalf of the church members, the minister wants to thank Mrs. A. L. Jones for her untiring efforts in the writing of this history. She has spent many hours in gathering the information and putting it in the excellent form in which we now have it.

As we turn back the pages of the first history of the Wesley Methodist Church, we must take an upward look because the Church needs to grow and reach higher levels of service each day.

The way upward was not always easy. There were many rough and steep places, and these were not reached without effort and sacrifice, and most of all, not without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To discuss and rightly appraise all the labors of those who have served as ministers, officers and workers in the church would be an almost impossible task and has not been attempted. There are many things that cannot be measured, such as the warm and loving dreams for the future of our church. However, we feel that it would be incomplete without making mention that the Lord has blessed us with some of the "salt of the earth".

At times we felt we were not making an upward journey, but were very deep in the valley, yet we always found more sunshine than clouds. Each time we had to come from the valley again we reached higher Christian levels and gained in spiritual growth.

Our Divine leader has blessed us greatly, and by the same Divine leadership, we prepare ourselves for God's challenge--"Climb Higher".

These Were the Things

For every hill I've had to climb,
For every stone that bruised my feet,
For all the blood and sweat and grime,
For blinding storms and burning heat,
My heart sings but a grateful song
These were the things that made me strong.

Author Unknown

"I would lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

Psalms 121:1-2